THE AWARD-WINNING INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

DARK HORSE BOOKS *presents*

BLACKSAD™

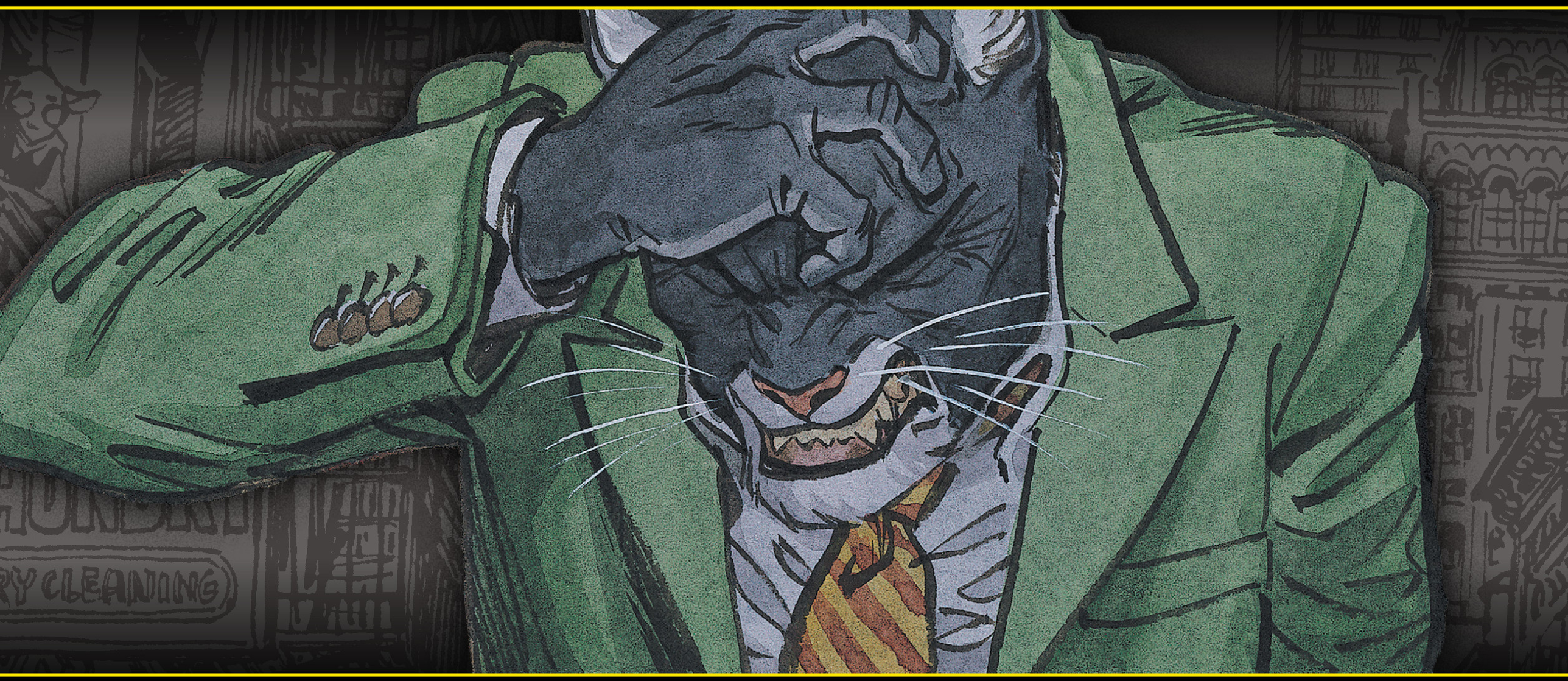
Amarillo

Juan DÍAZ CANALES *Juanjo* GUARNIDO

INTRODUCTION BY NEAL ADAMS

DARK HORSE BOOKS *presents*

BLACKSAD™


RY CLEANING

DARK HORSE BOOKS *presents*

BLACKSAD™

Created by

JUAN DÍAZ CANALES

and

JUANJO GUARNIDO

Dark Horse Books®

SOMETIMES MAGIC HAPPENS

And we don't notice, until it does.

BLACKSAD. I still have no idea what it means. Is it a name? An abbreviation? Two names? Black and sad? Sad? Really? Why sad? Unhappy?

Afro-American? Black? Black? . . . Unhappy?

Unhappy Afro-American guy. What the hell is this name, mentioned by some people in comic book stores, drifting by my head . . . what the hell were those voices talking about? Blacksad? I didn't get it.

I still don't. It . . . sounds good, sort of . . . but was everyone else like me . . . confused, but too embarrassed to *ask*? What . . .

Then, I saw it. Someone was handling it in a comic book store. What . . . the hell? It was European . . . and yet, somehow way, way so familiar.

I grabbed it and glommed it. Jumpin' jackrabbits! It was "Disney" and Humphrey Bogart, color film noir, and animal . . . *humans*!

As Jean Shepherd would say, "Holy Simoleons!" It was a dream.

I mean . . . you could "think" about doing this . . . but, to actually *do it*? Unthinkable. You'd . . . why, you'd have to find a brilliant artist, who was fully trained in the Disney machine . . .

The Disney machine?

Oh . . . boy, let me tell you. There is such a machine . . . part college and part training. A college specifically for students of the visual and performing arts.

The school was founded and created by, aha . . . Walt Disney. It was Disney's dream of a Caltech of the arts.

Among all freedoms there, was the . . . training to become Disney artists.

Did the artist of *Blacksad* go to CalArts? Did he work for Disney Studios? . . . Animate at Disney or for European suppliers for Disney?

Didn't matter . . . this was an incredible Disney artist who got into his Audi, or Citroën, or Fiat, and decided to drive down his own new road to give us *Blacksad*.

Was this a mutual love of artist and writer for detective novels/stories . . . or simply a kind of assignment? Accident or intent, Juanjo Guarnido created a new visual world, for Juan Díaz Canales's words.

It was a detective story . . . and the people were animals . . . animals in the style of Ken Hultgren and all those geniuses who gave us *Fantasia*, *Bambi*, and the rest. A smooth, seamless mix of human/animal anatomy.

The artist in me soared. Another artist who *could* do it, *did it*! It hadn't . . . no . . . there were others . . . good artists . . . *but really,* it hadn't *really* been done . . . *right!* . . . by anyone since Heinrich Kley, the German cartoonist-artist . . . who was the inspiration for the hippo-alligator ballet in *Fantasia*!

Here was the biggest pair of balls since Heinrich Kley, doing a detective novel in the classic American idiom. Bogart *et al*. transformed into animals à la Disney.

You have got to be freakin' kidding me . . . and it was in, *arrrgh*, Spanish.

Somebody stick a nine-inch nail in my eye. *Please*!

. . . And I couldn't read it. It was in Spanish. "Oh, woe is me," I thought, "that the fates could be so cruel!" quoting my favorite philosopher, Elmer Fudd. How could they do this to me? Some ne'er-do-well pirate had smuggled this "gem of the old world" into America and *not* translated it into English . . . the, as we know, mother language of the civilized world.

Of course, like anyone squeezed through the sausage compressor/stuffer that we know as the New York educational system . . . I knew just enough Spanish to drive me crazy trying to read the book.

I got to page six.

Now, kind people, you know . . . or may know, the process.

But, then . . . came a translation. Aha, yoiks, and away . . . translated into French. *Arrrrrgh!*

I . . . like you (I'll bet) know *less* French than Spanish.

Finally . . . as the world trundles along, an English translation shows up. Ta-daa!

I got to page six.

I must needs be a bit circumspect here. If I offend, I am truly sorry.

It "was" a "translation" into English, to be sure . . . but *was it* . . . hmmm . . . a sensitive rewriting into the American idiom . . . y'know?

No.

It irked me. I so wanted to read the book, but I could not . . . so I looked at the pictures . . . and, oh, what pretty pictures . . . and sorta "got" the story.

So . . . big deal. Who cares? (Well, me, of course, but there was nothing I could do. It lay in my brain like a dirty cup in the sink.)

Then for the second time I ran into Juanjo Guarnido at an American comic con.

Embarrassed, I spoke to him about my frustration and told him I would love to handle the translation, and, in fact, for my own pleasure I rewrote/translated the first six pages of the first book.

To my shock and awe . . . he told me he'd love it if I would translate his work into the American idiom.

Well-he-hell.

Somehow my daughter, Kris . . . got the word to Dark Horse that I would move heaven and earth in order to have the opportunity to handle the "next" translation.

Guess what? This is it.

So, I'm giddy . . . well, I *was* giddy . . . *then* . . . well, *now,* when I'm writing . . . which you will read *then* . . . later, when it's published . . . and I will probably be over the giddiness . . . though! . . . then-now I *am* giddy.

So . . . anyway . . . please, sit back and enjoy one of the newer greatest pleasures of *my* life, reading *Blacksad* . . . in English.

Give it as a present to your friends . . . who will love it. Read it in the subways and trains like they do in Japan, to inspire others to buy and read it. Tell your store to re-order and get some for your nephews, nieces, and whatever. Put it in a fat man's Christmas stocking. Car dealers . . . give it as a bonus in new cars. (Scratch the fat man's Christmas stocking.)

Two more little things:

1. Aren't you glad I didn't use the world "idiom" again, two paragraphs up? (You know you are, you little dickens.)

2. So (sigh) *gato* is cat in Spanish, so "Black Cat" is out . . . ! So . . . it's just plain Blacksad.

NEAL ADAMS

LAUNDRY
DRY CLEANING
REPAIR
SCANDALOUS
BEAUTY PAR
J.GUARNIDO

Get at
Admiral
You'll pay
Less!
FOR ALL THE
TELEVISION
MONEY CAN BUY
MAC A PINE AND SONS
RADIO & LEVISION
557 B R ST.
WINES & L ORS
Man, this is whiskey!
Royal
BY ALLEN LOWELL
WINES
LIQUORS
FREE PARKI

AMARILLO

Written by

JUAN DÍAZ CANALES

Illustrated by

JUANJO GUARNIDO

Translation by

KATIE LaBARBERA AND NEAL ADAMS

Lettering by

TOM ORZECHOWSKI AND LOIS BUHALIS

AAAAHH!

ARGLLL!!

GLUBB! GLLL!!

Highway Star MOTEL POOL

GLUB... BLUB...

1

AAH!

SO, TELL ME: **WHO** IS THE **GREATEST POET** OF ALL TIME? YOU'VE GOT EXACTLY **ONE** GUESS...

YOU! ABRAHAM GREENBERG!

NO, YOU IGNORANT PIECE OF SHIT! **ARTAUD** IS THE GREATEST!

GLUB!

YOU WANNA TALK ABOUT WHO'S **CRAZIER,** THEN YOU'RE RIGHT: ARTAUD'S GOT YOU BEAT. THOUGH NOT BY MUCH...

BUT AS A **WRITER,** YOU'RE THE **BEST,** ABE. A BONA FIDE POETIC **GENIUS.**

"IT HAS NOT BEEN DEFINITIVELY PROVED THAT THE LANGUAGE OF WORDS IS THE BEST POSSIBLE LANGUAGE."

YOUR WORDS ARE. NO DOUBT ABOUT IT: YOUR NEXT BOOK, THE ONE YOU'RE HOLDING, IS GONNA BE A **CLASSIC.** IT JUST NEEDS TO SEE THE LIGHT OF DAY...

MY **DEAR** CHAD... MY POEMS DON'T "SEE THE LIGHT." THEY **ARE** THE LIGHT...

THE **WORDS** ENLIGHTEN AND SHOW US THE WAY...

NO--! YOU'RE FREAKIN' **INSANE!**

I DON'T PLAN TO LET **ANY** OF MY VERSES END UP IN THE SLIMY HANDS OF THOSE **BUTCHERS** WHO PASS THEMSELVES OFF AS **EDITORS.**

IF YOU LIKE, WE CAN ALSO **PURIFY** THIS SCROLL YOU CALL A **NOVEL...**

DON'T EVEN **THINK** ABOUT IT! THAT'S **TWO YEARS** OF MY WORK!

"WORK"? I'M TALKING TO YOU ABOUT **POETRY** AND **REVELATION** AND THE TRUTH THAT **BLINDS,** AND YOU TALK ABOUT "**WORK**"?

IT SEEMS THE SUCCESS OF YOUR FIRST BOOK HAS KNOCKED YOU OFF THE **PATH.**

NO **GUTS,** NO **GLORY,** CHAD. GIVE YOUR STORY A HAPPY ENDING FOR ONCE, AND LEAVE THAT ROLL OF PAPER IN SOME **TOILET,** WHERE PEOPLE CAN PUT IT TO GOOD USE.

MOISANT FIELD.
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA.

NO, I NEVER DID FIND **ROSE.** YOUR **BAD LUCK** MUST BE CONTAGIOUS...

3

...AND MY BOSS WANTS ME BACK IN THE OFFICE, SO I **CAN'T** STICK AROUND NEW ORLEANS ANY LONGER. ARE YOU STILL THINKING OF STAYING?

NO CHOICE. I COULD USE A CHANGE OF SCENERY, BUT I'M FLAT BROKE.

TURNS OUT, MY BOSS ISN'T AS **FLUSH** AS YOURS.

HEY, I ALREADY SAID I'D LEND YOU MONEY FOR A FLIGHT, IF YOU WANT...

THANKS, **WEEK,** BUT I'D RATHER GET BACK WITH MY FEET ON THE **GROUND.**

I'LL JUST TRY TO FIND A NICE, QUIET JOB HERE, WHERE I DON'T HAVE TO DODGE BULLETS AND NOBODY WINDS UP DEAD... FOR A CHANGE.

ALL THAT HARD LUCK ON MY TAIL IS STARTING TO WEAR ME DOWN.

YOU COULD ALWAYS CHANGE CAREERS...

I WONDER SOMETIMES IF I SHOULDN'T HAVE CONTINUED THE FAMILY TRADITION AND BECOME A **PHOTOG,** LIKE MY GRANDFATHER.

4

THAT'S IT! YOU'D BE A GREAT PHOTOGRAPHER. YOU'RE A **QUICK SHOT,** AND YOU KNOW HOW TO BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME. ALL YOU NEED IS A **CAMERA...**

...AND HERE YOU GO. **KEEP** IT. MAYBE YOU'LL FIND YOUR TRUE CALLING.

NO! NO SHOOTING, PERIOD! I'LL BE HAPPY IF YOU JUST WATER MY PLANTS TILL I GET HOME.

AND SPEAKING OF QUICK... BETTER **RUN,** OR YOU'LL MISS YOUR PLANE.

?

THAT DAMN WEEKLY...

5

'SCUSE ME. YOU DROPPED YOUR WALLET.

HEY, PARDNER, THANKS A LOT!

NO PROBLEM.

BAF!

THAT WAS A LUCKY BREAK, PARDNER. I **OWE** YOU ONE! ANYTHING I CAN **DO** FER YOU?

I AM LOOKING FOR WORK.

HOW ABOUT THAT! WELL, IF YOU KNOW HOW TO **DRIVE,** YOU JUST FOUND YOURSELF A JOB!

WELL, IF YOU KNOW HOW TO **PAY,** YOU JUST FOUND YOURSELF A DRIVER. AS LONG AS I DON'T HAVE TO KILL OR BEAT UP ANYONE.

HA HA HA! WELL, YOU MUSTA NOTICED THAT I'M NOT HURTIN' FER CASH. LOOK...

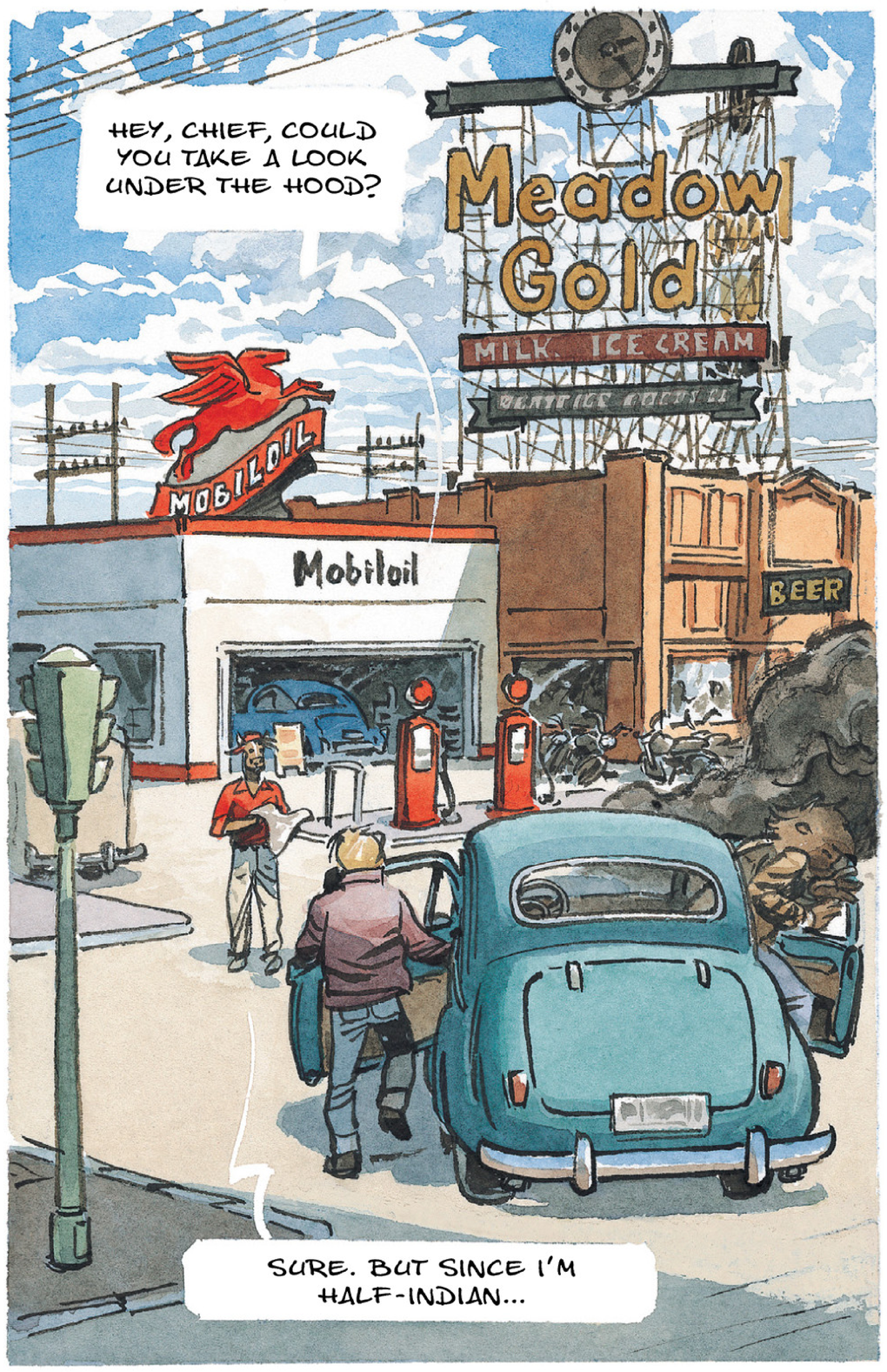
...THERE'S A FLIGHT I **GOTTA** CATCH, AND I NEED SOMEONE TO DRIVE MY CAR BACK TO MY HOUSE IN TULSA...

YA SEEM LIKE A STRAIGHT SHOOTER, SON--THE KIND WHO STAYS OUTTA TROUBLE.

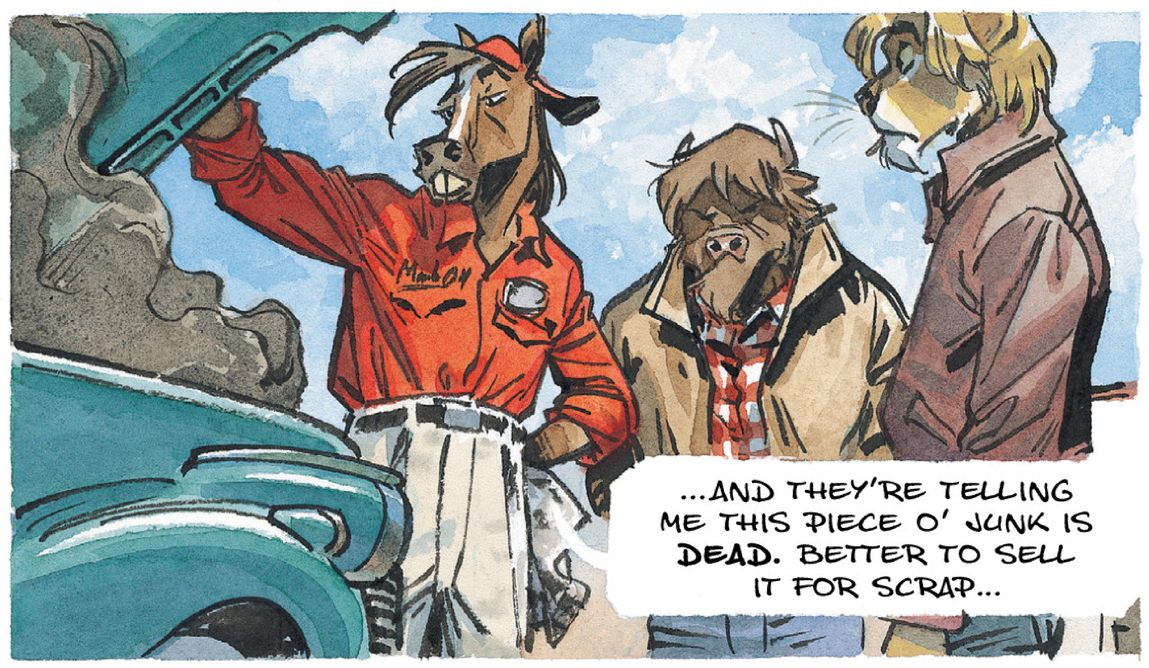
THAT'S SOME EYE YOU'VE GOT... I'LL TAKE THE JOB.

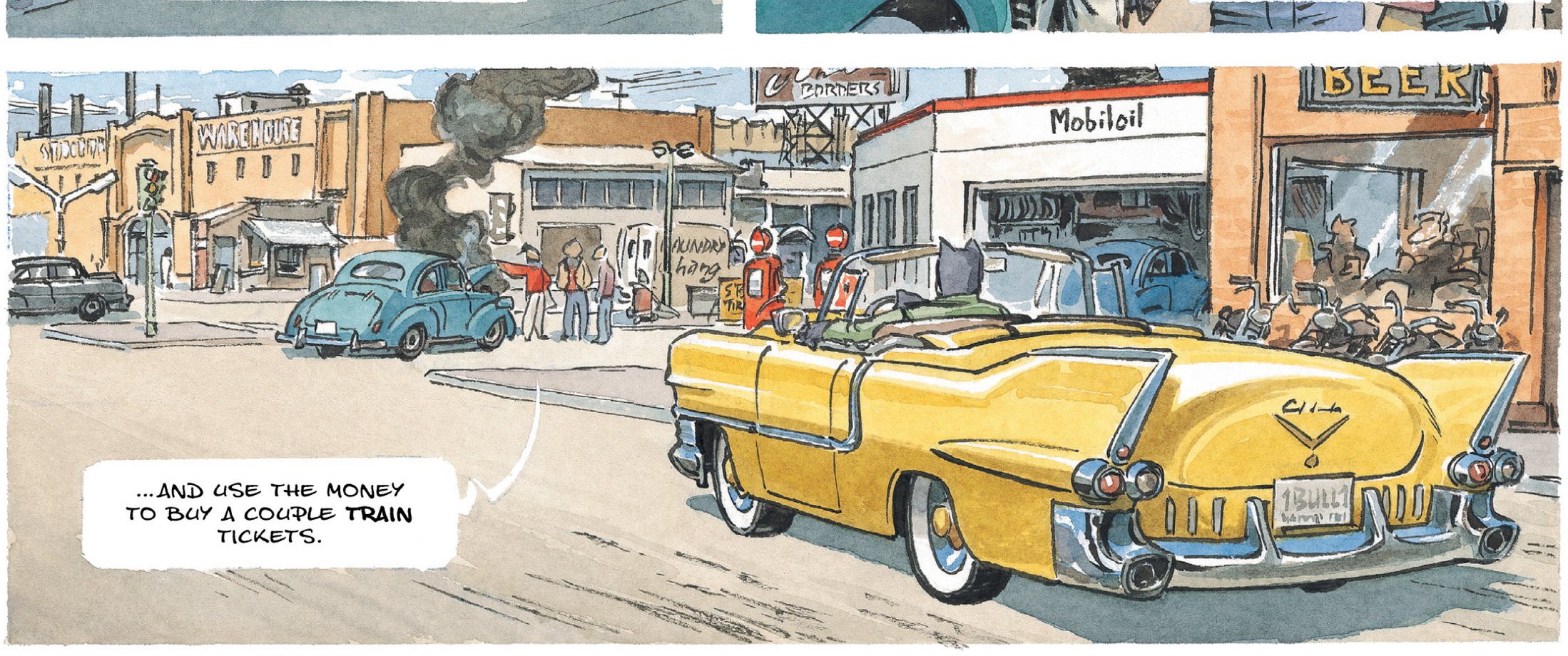
Eldorado

ROUTE
US
66
WHEEEEE!
NCAKES
BREAKFAST-DINNER
BETTY'S MOTEL
EAT AT JOE'S
DRUGSTORE
TULSA, OKLAHOMA.


HEY, CHIEF, COULD YOU TAKE A LOOK UNDER THE HOOD?
Meadow Gold
MILK. ICE CREAM
MOBILOIL
Mobiloil
BEER
SURE. BUT SINCE I'M HALF-INDIAN...

...I CAN PRETTY MUCH READ WHAT THOSE SMOKE SIGNALS HAVE TO SAY...
LET IT BLEAT


...AND THEY'RE TELLING ME THIS PIECE O' JUNK IS DEAD. BETTER TO SELL IT FOR SCRAP...


WAREHOUSE
Mobiloil
BEER
...AND USE THE MONEY TO BUY A COUPLE TRAIN TICKETS.

HEY, ABE. GRAB OUR STUFF AND GET READY TO ROLL...

'KAY!

VRROOMM!

?!

WHAT THE HELL--?!

MY BIKE! ASSHOLES!

BEER!

SLICK MOVE, CHAD!

?!

SHITHEADS!

OUCH!

SCKEEEEE!

ARGH!

TAKE 'EM OUT, GOLD MEDAL! THEY GOT IT COMIN'!

CLANG!

GUT THOSE BASTARDS!

HAVE YOU TWO **NOT** FIGURED OUT THAT PRIVATE PROPERTY IS **SACRED** IN THIS COUNTRY?

JUST AS SACRED AS LAW AND ORDER...

AND WHO THE FUCK ARE **YOU?** CLARENCE THE GUARDIAN ANGEL?

CLOSE ENOUGH. POINT IS, YOU KEEP THIS UP AND COPS WILL BE ALL OVER THE PLACE.

BRING THE COPS... THEY CAN EXPLAIN TO THESE TWO LITTLE THUGS THAT STEALING MOTORCYCLES IS AGAINST THE LAW! AND LAWS ARE THERE TO BE **OBEYED.**

GOT IT... AGREED.

SO TELL YOUR AMIGOS HERE TO CHILL OUT, AND **NOT** TO MURDER THEIR FELLOW CITIZENS.

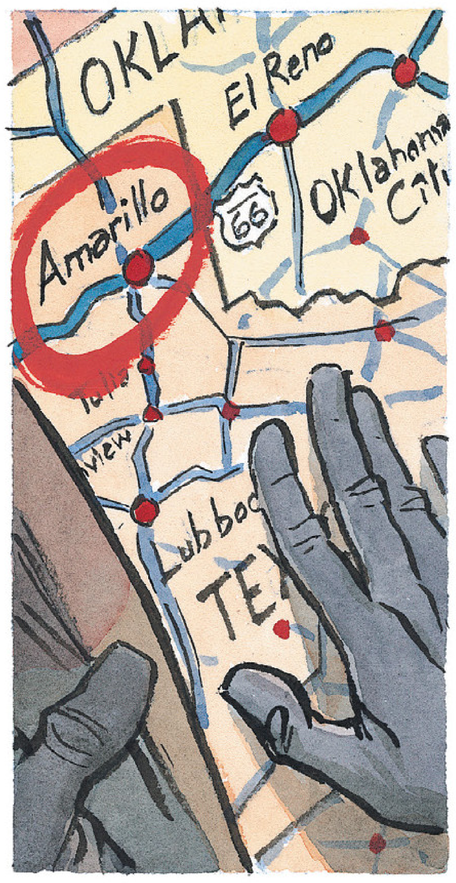
VRROOOOMM!

LET IT BEAT

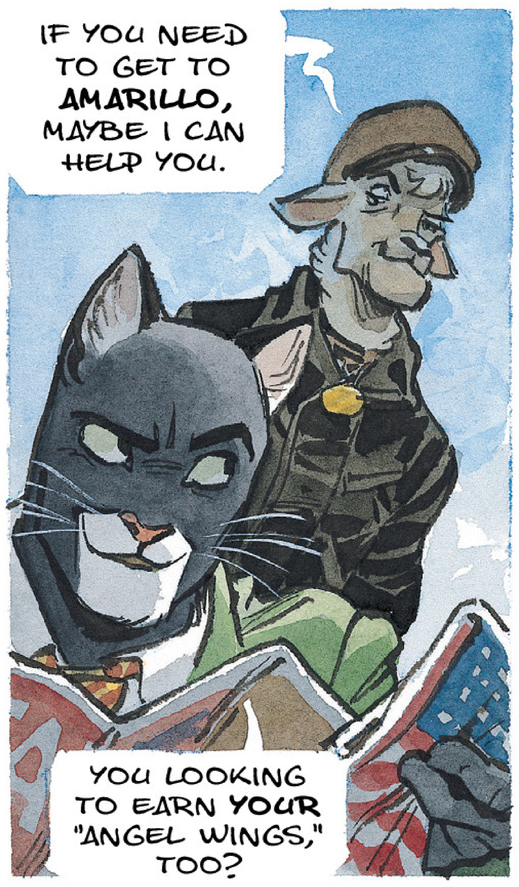
I **TOLD** YA, CLARENCE! PUNKS LIKE THAT GOT **NO** RESPECT FOR NOTHIN'.

OH, SHIT.

9


El Reno
Amarillo
66

Y'SEEM LIKE AN ALL-RIGHT TYPE, CLARENCE... AN' YA TOOK A STIFF ONE.


IF YOU NEED TO GET TO **AMARILLO,** MAYBE I CAN HELP YOU.
YOU LOOKING TO EARN **YOUR** "ANGEL WINGS," TOO?

HA, HA, HA! NOT ME, DUDE. I'VE GOT MY BIKE IF I REALLY WANNA FLY. BUT CHUCK CAN LEND YOU **HIS.** HE WON'T BE ABLE TO RIDE FOR A FEW DAYS.

THANKS, GOLD MEDAL. YOU'RE AN ALL-RIGHT TYPE YOURSELF.

AMARILLO, TEXAS.

HIT THAT JIVE, JACK ♪♪ PUT IT IN YOUR POCKET TILL I GET BACK ♪.

GOING DOWNTOWN TO SEE A MAN

AND I AIN'T GOT TIME TO SHAKE YOUR HAND..

I'M TELLIN' YOU, I NEVER HIT THE PAVEMENT WITHOUT **BIG SISTER** HERE. AMARILLO'S STREETS CAN BE MIGHTY DANGEROUS: THEY'RE CRAWLING WITH **COPS.**

GOOD OL' **BILLY SORROWS.** YOU'RE MORE AFRAID OF THE **LAW** THAN ANY ACT OF GOD...

WITH GOOD REASON! YOU CAN'T TRUST THOSE DAMN FLATFEET. THEY'RE JUST PLAIN **RATS:** NO TASTE, NO ARTISTIC SENSIBILITY. AND LIKE RATS, THEY'RE **EVERYWHERE...**

SEE THAT CREEP? I'M SURE HE'S A COP. AN' HE HAS TO **DIE** BEFORE SUNUP...

YOU GOT ANY **GUTS,** KID?

PLENTY. BUT A LOUSY AIM.

11

IN FACT, CHAD, YOU DON'T HAVE **EITHER**...

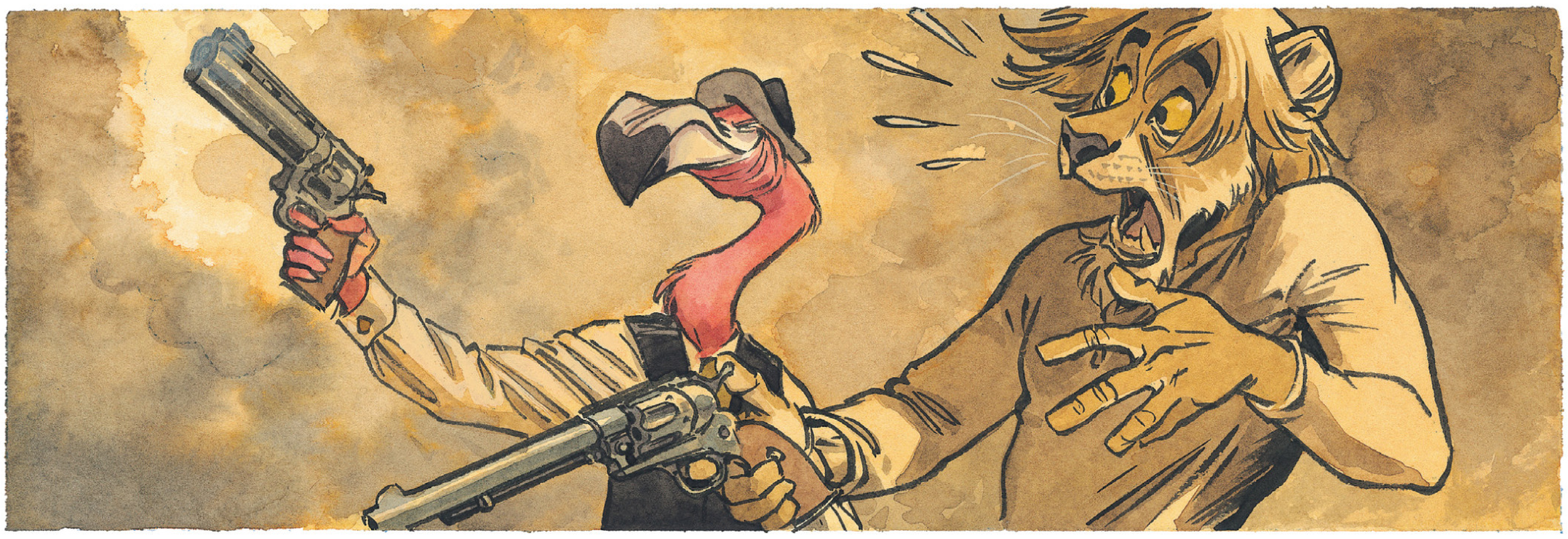
NEVER BELIEVE WHAT COMES OUT OF THE MOUTH OF A GUY WHO PUTS A **PRICE TAG** ON HIS OWN WORDS.

OKAY. LET'S SEE WHICH ONE OF YOU IS **LYING**...

SHOOT.

BLAM

12



THIS... THIS IS STUPID.
CLAP CLAP CLAP
NO CALCULATED ACT OF VIOLENCE IS MEANINGLESS. IT'S COWARDICE AND STAGNATION THAT **ROT** A MAN'S SOUL.

IF YOU WANT TO BE A **REAL** WRITER SOMEDAY, YOU'D BETTER **FACE** THAT!

WHO'S NEXT?

13

YOU PLANNING TO STAY IN AMARILLO A WHILE?
UNTIL MY AGENT GETS HERE FROM L.A. I'M MEETING WITH HIM...

...TO HAND OVER THE MANUSCRIPT OF MY NEXT NOVEL.
WELL THEN, PAL, YOU'D BETTER GET PACKING...

...SINCE YOUR NOVEL'S ALREADY ON ITS WAY TO TIBET...
...I WRAPPED UP THE SCROLL AND MAILED IT TO THE DALAI LAMA...
ARE YOU KIDDING ME?

NO, BRO. DIG IT! I FIGURE HE'S THE ONLY PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO CAN PUT YOU BACK ON THE PATH OF LIGHT AND REDEMPTION.
THAT SCROLL... WAS... MY LIFE'S WORK!
ADMIT IT, CHAD. YOU JUST DON'T HAVE THAT LYRIC SENSE...

14

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU, TO JUDGE ME? WHAT'VE YOU GOT THAT MAKES YOU ANY BETTER THAN ME?

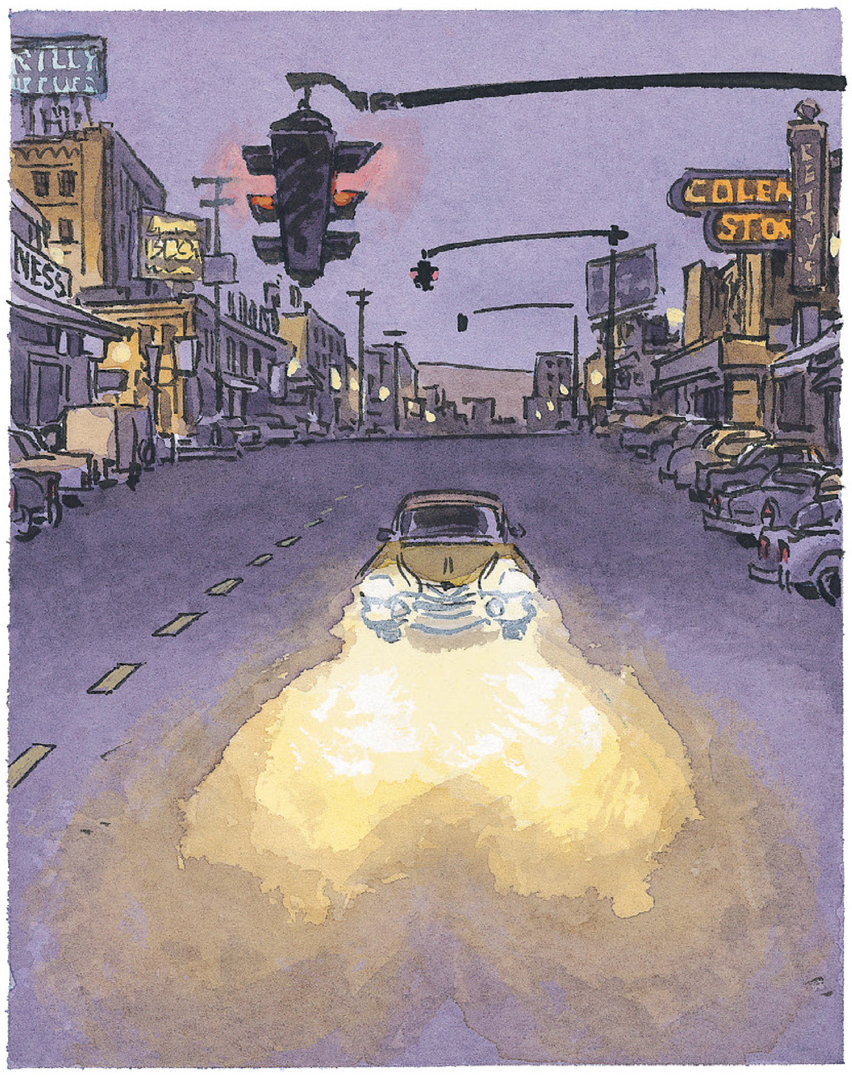
POETRY. AND BALLS.

OKAY, FINE. WE'LL FIX THAT FIRST!

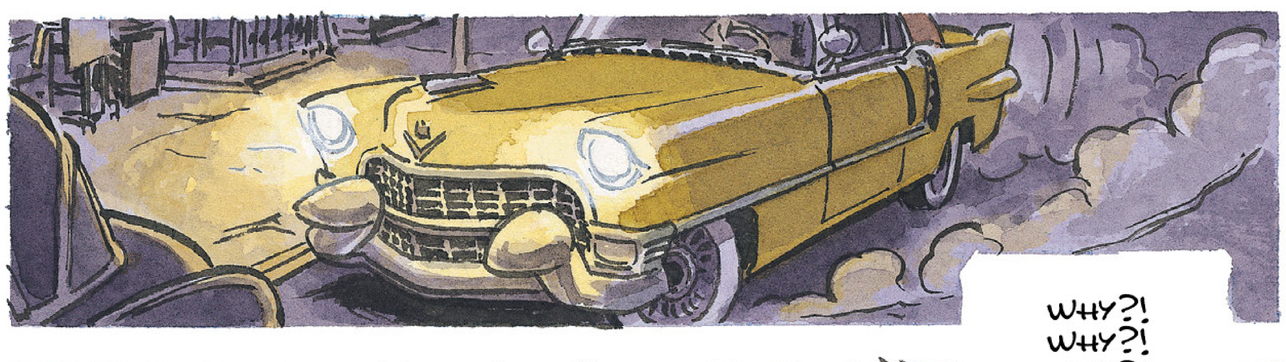
BLAMMM!

15

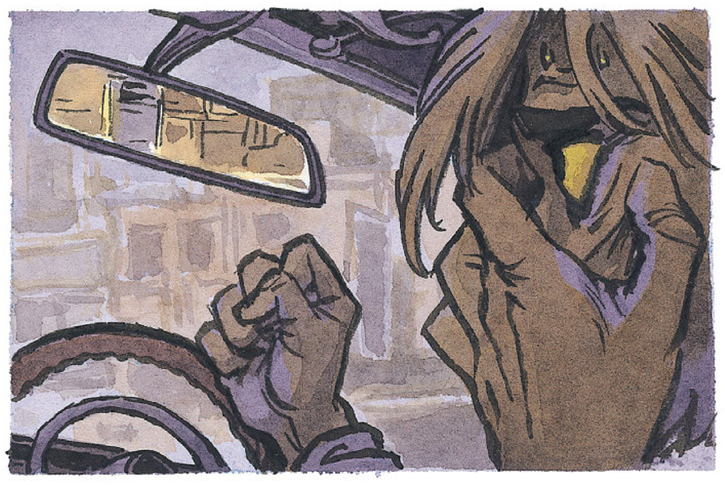
YOU GONNA **HELP** ME WITH THIS, OR WOULD YOU RATHER WE WRITE A FUCKING **SONNET** ABOUT IT?

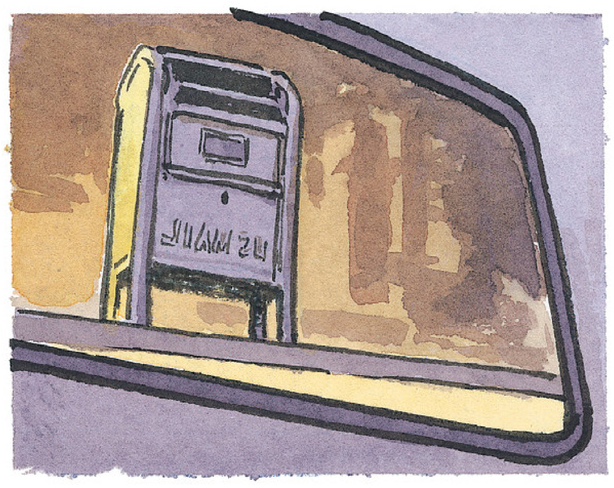


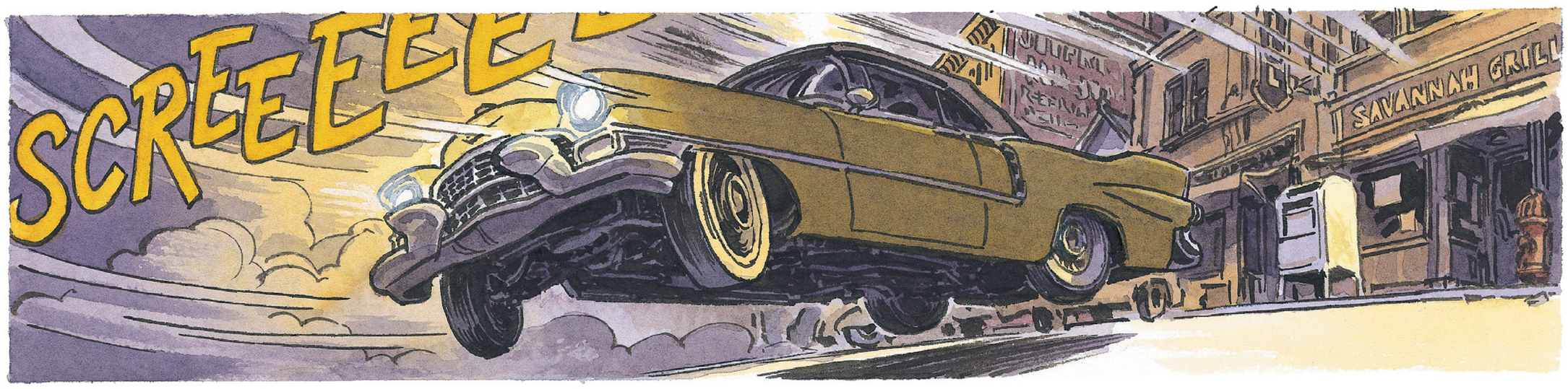
WHY, ABE?


WHY?!
WHY?!
WHY?!

BONK
BONK
BONK






SCREEEEE
SAVANNAH GRILL

CRASH!

CRASH
SMASH
CRASH

16

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO.

MAD

4HA INTERE MUCH MOR CHARACTER

HA, HA, HA! THIS KURTZMAN GUY'S A RIOT!

YOU LOOK LIKE AN **IDIOT.** READING **COMIC BOOKS** AT YOUR AGE...

HEH, HEH, HEH!

BAF!

HERE'S OUR NEW "CASE"!

WHEN WILL WE EVER GET **OUT** OF THIS SHITHOLE?

LIGHTEN UP! ACCORDING TO THIS, WE GOTTA HIT THE ROAD. TO TEXAS-- AMARILLO. IT'S A CASE OF...

..."DESTRUCTION OF A U.S. MAILBOX." A WHOLE CAREER IN THE **FBI** JUST TO WIND UP RESCUING SOME HICK TOWN'S POSTCARDS... FUCKIN' **HUMILIATING!**

C'MON. SOONER WE GET GOING, SOONER WE'RE DONE!

I'D GIVE MY EYETEETH TO **NAIL** THAT GODDAMN CAT...*

TALES GALLI

17

* SEE **RED SOUL,** FROM **BLACKSAD** VOL. 1

AMARILLO, TEXAS.

I GOTTA GO FILE A STOLEN CAR REPORT. ONE OF THOSE HIPSTERS LOOKED ODDLY FAMILIAR TO ME--COULD BE A LEAD TO THE CAR. YOU WANNA COME?

NO WAY, AMIGO! I'M A LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN AND ALL, BUT THE **FUZZ** AND I DON'T EXACTLY SEE EYE TO EYE.

THEN HERE'S WHERE WE PART WAYS. THANKS, GOLD MEDAL.

LOTSA LUCK, CLARENCE!

GORGEOUS. THE FLOWER **AND** YOU.

18

HAVE YOU PERCHANCE SEEN A HANDSOME YOUNG **LION** HEREABOUTS?

NO. I'M SURE I'D HAVE NOTICED.

OF COURSE, NOT THAT HE'S AS GOOD-LOOKING AS **I** AM, BUT...

LET ME **GO,** YOU FREAKIN' TOADIES!

YOU GOT IT.

HEY!

BONK BONK BONK

OWW!

OUCH

YOWCH

NOW QUIT STIRRING UP SHIT, OR WE'LL TOSS YOU BACK IN LOCKUP **ANOTHER** NIGHT.

HEH, HEH!

THAT WAS AN ACTIONABLE ABUSE OF YOUR RIGHTS, DEAR SIR...

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF: **NEAL BEATO,** ATTORNEY. IF YOU WANT TO FILE A POLICE BRUTALITY CHARGE, I'LL BE HAPPY TO HANDLE IT FOR YOU.

THANKS, BUT WHAT I REALLY **NEED** IS A DRINK. THOSE DICKS LEFT ME **DRY** THE **WHOLE** NIGHT.

AAAND... NOW YOU'RE TALKIN'!

MY NAME'S **FILIPE PAPALEGUAS,** BUT YOU, MY NEW FRIEND, CAN CALL ME **PHIL.** I'M A STAGEHAND AT THE **SUNFLOWER CIRCUS...**

OR... I **WAS,** UNTIL THEY FIRED ME FOR DRINKING. CAN YOU **BELIEVE** THAT?

I **CAN!** WRONGFUL TERMINATION. WITH AN AGGRESSIVE DEFENSE...

19

AGGRESSIVE? I COULDA USED THAT **YESTER-DAY,** TO BREAK THE LEGS OF THAT **BUM** THEY HIRED TO REPLACE ME! SOME SCRUFFY-LOOKIN' BEATNIK LION.

WAIT, WHERE **IS** THAT CIRCUS? IF IT'S THE LION I'M THINKING OF, I CAN **HELP** YOU BREAK HIS LEGS...

...FOR FREE.

IT SEEMS WE HAVE A DILEMMA: THREE PLAINTIFFS BUT ONLY **TWO** LEGS TO BREAK. WHERE'S THIS **SUNFLOWER CIRCUS** SET UP, MY DEAR PHIL?

TOO LATE FER THAT, NEW PAL. THEY FOLDED THE TENT AND SHOULD BE MOVING ON TO THEIR NEXT GIG... WHICH IS... UM... DENVER.

NEAL BEATO. ATTORNEY-AT-LAW AND LITERARY AGENT FOR **CHAD LOWELL,** OUR INFAMOUS LION ON THE RUN.

VERY CONVENIENT. YOU CAN START REHEARSING YOUR ARGUMENTS IN HIS DEFENSE FOR GRAND THEFT AUTO...

... A **FELONY.**

MOST ASSUREDLY. MY CARD?

NO THANKS. WHAT I NEED IS TRANSPORT TO DENVER. DO YOU HAVE A **CAR?**

ARE YOU KIDDING? I CAN GET **ANY-THING** WITH A SIMPLE FLICK OF MY WRIST...

CHAD'S A GOOD KID. OF COURSE, I'M A FAMILY FRIEND. KNOWN HIM FOR YEARS...

HE HAS A LOT OF TALENT, BUT HE CAN'T FIGURE OUT HOW TO COPE WITH IT. HE HAD A REAL SURPRISE SUCCESS WITH HIS FIRST NOVEL, MORE SO THAN ANY OTHER WRITER OF HIS GENERATION.

IRONICALLY, IT'S PLUNGED HIM INTO A SEA OF **DOUBT.** HE CAN'T SEEM TO JUDGE WHAT'S **GOOD** OR WHAT'S **BAD** ANYMORE...

SO THIS IS WHERE **YOU** SHOW UP TO SAY THAT PUBLISHING HIS NEW BOOK IS WHAT'S GOOD... AND THEN PROCEED TO **CASH IN,** RIGHT?

WHO IN THE WORLD DOES **NOT** NEED MONEY? IF YOU HELP ME FIND HIM, I CAN GIVE YOU A PIECE.

I JUST WANT HIM TO RETURN THE CAR AND TELL THE OWNER WHAT HAPPENED...

THE REST IS **YOUR** BUSINESS.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR STOPPING. WE'RE HEADING ALL THE WAY TO DENVER...

WELLLLL... THAT'S SOME COINCIDENCE, BOYS! 'CAUSE I'M ON MY WAY TO THE COLORADO HOME 'N' GARDEN SHOW... IN **DENVER.**

PERFECT. A LITTLE **LUCK** FOR ONCE.

VROOOOOM

21

DENVER, COLORADO.

CHAMALO THE RAINBOW

SHEESH COBRA THE ARMLESS HYPNOTIST FROM INDIA

MR. TATOU NATURAL BORN ARMOR

AMENOPHYS SKINNED CAT

KUMA THE GIANT & ZAP THE TINY

BLIN Smells GLA

CROSSBOW BILLY

22

!!

WHAT'LL YOU **GIVE** ME IF I CAN READ WHAT'S INSIDE YOUR HEAD...?

PLEASE DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME. WHAT'S **OUTSIDE** MY HEAD IS **WAY** MORE INTERESTING...

I'M JUST HOPELESS! I'LL **NEVER** MAKE IT AS A FORTUNE-TELLER... THAT MUCH I CAN ALREADY SEE.

PRINCESS TUPTIM THE SIAMESE MENTAL MARVEL

OOPS, SORRY...

DON'T SWEAT IT. THAT GIG WASN'T **MY** IDEA. I'D JUST AS SOON STAY **BEHIND** THE CURTAIN.

I WON'T TELL A SOUL. I KNOW HOW TO KEEP A SECRET.

POK

SURE YOU DO! I CAN READ IT IN YOUR MIND!

DIG YA LATER...

!!

SHE'S ONE **CUTE** LITTLE KITTY-CAT, AIN'T SHE?

THAT'S **LUANNE**, TCHANG'S ASSISTANT. TCHANG THE **KNIFE-THROWER.**

AN' **YOU** DON'T BE THINKIN' NOTHIN' ABOUT **HER**...

...'CAUSE I'VE HAD **MY EYE** ON HER... FOR A LONG TIME.

HA! HA! HA!

AMARILLO, TEXAS.

THAT **RUINED** MAILBOX HAD FLECKS OF **YELLOW PAINT** ON IT: **THIS** PAINT! WHICH LED ME TO FURTHER **DEDUCE** THAT THIS ABANDONED CADILLAC MIGHT HAVE **SOMETHING** TO DO WITH THE MAILBOX INCIDENT.

WE DIDN'T COME ALL THE WAY TO HELL AND GONE TO HEAR **YOUR** DEDUCTIONS, LITTLE DOGIE. **DEDUCING** IS **FBI** WORK.

WHO'S THE OWNER OF THE CAR, DO YOU KNOW?

NO... WE WERE **INSTRUCTED** NOT TO TOUCH **ANYTHING** UNTIL **YOU** ARRIVED. BESIDES, IT SEEMS I DON'T ACTUALLY **MAKE** DEDUCTIONS.

HEY! GIMME A HAND WITH THE TRUNK.

!!

UGGHH. GRUESOME... THIS GUY'S **PULP!** WE'LL NEVER IDENTIFY HIM BY WHAT'S LEFT OF HIS FACE.

YEAH... BUT HIS HEART WAS BROKEN **BEFORE** THE FACELIFT. SOMEBODY BLEW HIS CHEST INTO HIS SPINE.

LOOK, ANOTHER SURPRISE: A RAINCOAT...

...AND A WALLET!

GOOD, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN PUT A **FACE** TO THE BODY IN THE TRUNK...

24

?!

FBI

50 STATE OF NEW YORK AUTO DRIVERS LICENSE

WELL... **HEL-LO,** OLD PAL! NAH... THIS CAT'S NOT OUR **STIFF,** NOT THAT I'D MIND.

BUT NOW WE HAVE A FIRST-CLASS **SUSPECT.** WE'LL NEED TO INTERROGATE ANYONE WHO MIGHT HAVE SEEN HIM: STREET WORKERS, HOBOS, MENDICANTS...

WE DON'T **HAVE** MENDICANTS HERE AND DAMN FEW BUMS! THE ONLY **ALCOHOLIC** WE'VE GOT IN LOCKUP IS A **TRANSIENT,** A REPEAT OFFENDER: SOME BIRD BY THE NAME OF **FILIPE PAPALEGUAS.**

THEN WE'LL START WITH HIM. I GOT A FEELING WE'RE GONNA HAVE US SOME **FUN...**

CAPULIN VOLCANO, NEW MEXICO.

...THEN THIS FELLER TELLS ME: "TRAVELING PAINT-SALESMAN IS THE PERFECT JOB FOR A COLORED GUY LIKE YOU..."

...SO I GO, "HEY! YOU MEAN **COLOR-FUL** GUY, NOT NO COLORED GUY! DON'T GO MISTAKIN' ME FER ONE O' THEM **BLACK BOYS!** HEH, HEH, HEH!

'COURSE... NO OFFENSE INTENDED.

SAY, BUDDY, FER A LAFFIN' HYENA, YOU DON'T GOT MUCH SENSE O' HUMOR... HEH, HEH, HEH!

♫ THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC'S GOT ME IN ITS SPELL... THAT OLD BLACK MAGIC THAT YOU WEAVE SO WELL... ♫

SPEAKIN' O' COLOREDS! LISSEN TA JUS' HOW **LOW DOWN** AN' **FUNKY** THEY GET WHEN THEY START TA SINGIN'...

'COURSE... NO OFFENSE INTENDED...

YES, THE GUY **WAS** AN **ASSHOLE,** I GIVE YOU THAT... BUT PUNCHING HIM IN THE HEAD **WHILE** HE'S DRIVING? VERY, VERY DANGEROUS.

WELL... NOW THAT HE'S GOT A **BLACK EYE,** HE CAN CONSIDER HIMSELF EVEN **MORE COLORFUL!**

'COURSE... NO OFFENSE INTENDED...

HEE! HEE! HEE!

LUCKILY, I KNOW SOMEONE WHO LIVES AROUND HERE WHO CAN HELP US... IF WE CAN GET ANOTHER **RIDE** BEFORE DARK.

HEE! HEE! HEE!

IWERKS & KUPKA SUNFLOWER CIRCUS

...A HUGE HAND FOR THE FABULOUS...

...HILOBATI AERIALISTS!

NEXT UP: THE ONE, THE ONLY, THE AUDACIOUS AND AMAZING...

HUMBOLDT, THE PENGUIN CANNONBALL!

KNOCK OFF THE DISAPPEARING ACT, KID! I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU. IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE ME MISS THAT STUPID **DRUNK**, PHIL.

BOOOM

YOU NEED TO FIND MY ASSISTANT, LUANNE. AND GET **CRACKING!**

OKAY... I'M ON IT!

"MY NUMBER STARTS RIGHT AFTER ELMORE THE CLOWN."

...YOU MIGHT NOT REMEMBER **ME**, LITTLE LADY, BUT I SURE HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN **YOU**. OR YOUR **REAL** NAME... **EVA.**

I HAVE **NO** IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALK-ING ABOUT!

SURE YOU DO! I WORKED AT YOUR GRANDPA'S HOUSE YEARS AGO. AND I BOUNCED YOU ON MY KNEES **MANY** A TIME WHEN YOU WERE JUST A **TINY** LITTLE DOLL...

GET YOUR HANDS **OFF** ME!

AAAAH!

BUT IF YOU WANT ME TO HOLD MY TONGUE ABOUT WHAT I KNOW... YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO BE A LITTLE **NICER** TO LITTLE OL' ME.

YAARRGH!!
LET HER GO, YOU SCUM!
28

I'LL KILL YOU!

ARGH... AAA...

AAARGH!

CHUNK!

WHAT... WHAT HAVE I DONE?!

LUANNE! WE HAD TO **STALL** THE NUMBER! WHAT THE HELL IS GO--?

AHHH! HELP! MURDER!

HELP! HE KILLED POLYPHEMUS!

29

AH!

GOT 'IM!

OOMPF!

LOCK HIM UP, AND THEN EVERYONE GET BACK TO WORK.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON... AS IF NOTHING'S HAPPENED.

TOMORROW WE'LL ALL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH HIM, TOGETHER.

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO.

BUILT IN 1610, **SAN MIGUEL** IS PROBABLY...

...THE OLDEST CHURCH IN ALL FIFTY STATES.

♫ ?

SETTLE DOWN, NEAL.

AH, BUT... WITH A DOLL LIKE HER, IT'S TOUGH TO RESTRAIN MYSELF, MY FRIEND.

WELL, MAKE AN EFFORT. THAT'S MY **SISTER.** DONNA.

RATON, NEW MEXICO.

IF YOU EVER PLAN TO MOTOR WEST, ♪ TRAVEL MY WAY, TAKE THE HIGHWAY THAT IS BEST. ♫ GET YOUR KICKS ON ROUTE SIXTY-SIX...

31

IT WINDS FROM CHICAGO TO L.A., MORE THAN TWO THOUSAND MILES ALL THE WAY. GET YOUR KICKS ON ROUTE SIXTY-SIX... ♪

...SO RAY AND I ARE GETTING BY, THANKS TO MY TOUR GUIDE JOB IN SANTA FE.

WHAT BRINGS **YOU** TO OUR LITTLE CORNER OF THE WORLD?

IT'S A LONG STORY, AND YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT ANYWAY. BUT I'LL NEED TO BORROW YOUR CAR.

RATON

♪ NOW YOU GO THROUGH SAINT LOOEY, JOPLIN, MISSOURI, AND OKLAHOMA CITY IS MIGHTY PRETTY. YOU SEE AMARILLO, GALLUP, NEW MEXICO... ♪

OKAY... BUT DON'T **TRASH** IT. THAT CAR AND RAY ARE THE **ONLY** GOOD THINGS LEFT FROM MY MARRIAGE.

ANY NEWS FROM DAD?

NOTHING SINCE THAT LAST LETTER...

♪ KINGMAN, BARSTOW, SAN BERNARDINO... ♪

♪ WON'T YOU GET HIP TO THIS TIMELY TIP: WHEN YOU MAKE THAT CALIFORNIA TRIP GET YOUR KICKS ON ROUTE SIXTY-SIX. ♪

UNCA JOHN! CAN I SEE YOUR GUN?

GOOD GUYS DON'T CARRY GUNS, RAY, 'CAUSE WE KNOW THEY ALWAYS WIND UP **SHOOTING** SOMEONE.

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA. DON'T FORGET ♪ WINONA... ♪

YEAH! THAT'S WHY THEY'RE SO **COOL!**

32

...THE CODE OF THE CIRCUS **BROTHERHOOD** IS VERY CLEAR: WHOEVER KILLS A MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY IS JUDGED **WITHIN** THE FAMILY.

AND THE PUNISHMENT FOR MURDER IS... **DEATH!** YOU ALL **KNOW** THIS!

33

THIS ISN'T A DIME NOVEL, ELMORE, AND WE'RE NOT SOME ROMANTIC BUNCH OF **PIRATES.** WE'VE GOT A **BUSINESS** TO PROTECT, WHICH MEANS WE SHOULD FOLLOW THE LETTER OF THE LAW.

I VOTE WE TURN HIM OVER TO THE POLICE. WE'VE GOT **ENOUGH** PROBLEMS JUST KEEPING THIS SINKING SHIP AFLOAT, WITHOUT A **MURDERER** TO DEAL WITH, TOO.

LOOK, SIMON, IF THE POLICE GET INVOLVED, WE'LL HAVE TO SHUT DOWN, AND WE CAN'T **AFFORD** THAT, NOT EVEN FOR A FEW DAYS. WE NEED MONEY, **FAST,** JUST TO KEEP FROM GOING BELLY UP!

IF POLYPHEMUS'S DEATH GETS AROUND, THAT'D BE THE **WORST** POSSIBLE PUBLICITY...

...THE **END** OF SUNFLOWER!

JUST DO WHAT YOU NEED TO DO. THAT'S ONLY FAIR.

YOU HEARD HIM. ANY OBJECTIONS, RAISE YOUR HAND...

BACK TO WORK! TEAR DOWN THE BIG TENT. **FOLD UP!**

THE SUNFLOWER CIRCUS WILL DO A QUIET FADE FROM DENVER, AS IF WE WERE NEVER EVEN HERE...

34

LET ME TALK TO THE KID! WE DON'T WANT HIM TO GIVE US THE SLIP NOW.

I DOUBT HE WILL. WITH ALL THE **STUNTS** HE'S PULLED, A **CIRCUS** IS THE **PERFECT** SPOT FOR HIM.

COTTON CANDY

WERKS KUPKA SUNFLOWER CIRCUS

I JUST HOPE WE'RE NOT TOO LATE AGAIN.

LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE PULLING UP STAKES...

DON'T YOU WORRY! IF IT'S A **PERFORMANCE** YOU WANT, JUST WATCH THE GREAT NEAL BEATO CROSS-EXAMINE THAT GORGEOUS CREATURE!

35

HEL-LO! WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FRIEND OF OURS. CHAD? I BELIEVE HE WORKS HERE...

I... I DON'T KNOW ANYONE BY THAT NAME...

HAVE WE MET BEFORE? YOUR FACE IS VERY FAMILIAR...

MY NAME'S ELMORE KUPKA, THE BOSS OF THIS CIRCUS... CAN I HELP YOU BOYS?

WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FRIEND WHO WORKS HERE... A YOUNG LION?

GOT IT! I KNOW WHO SHE IS!

PAF!

I NEVER FORGET A PRETTY FACE... OR A REWARD WITH LOTS OF ZEROES ATTACHED!

ALL RIGHT. I GOT A BUSINESS PROPOSITION FOR YOU: I'LL TAKE YOU TO CHAD IF YOU TELL ME HOW TO GET MY MITTS ON THAT REWARD.

DEAL! TELL HIM WHATEVER YOU HAVE TO TELL HIM, NEAL, AND LET'S BE DONE WITH THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL...

36

CHAD'S IN HERE. WE CAUGHT HIM STEALING, SO WE LOCKED HIM UP IN THE BACK.

THAT KID HAS A REAL **PROBLEM** KEEPING HIS PAWS OFF OTHER PEOPLE'S PROPERTY...

SLAM!!

ALMOST FORGOT... THERE ARE SOME GOOD OL' BOYS WAITING FOR YOU. SO LONG, RUBES!

WAIT... WHAT?

SURPRISE!

DIDN'T TAKE MUCH TO CONVINCE YOUR BUDDY PHIL HERE TO LEAD US TO THE CIRCUS.

THIS BIRD'LL DO **ANYTHING** FOR A DRINK...

37

DESTRUCTION OF A POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT MAILBOX--NOT TO MENTION THAT **STIFF** IN THE TRUNK OF THE CADDY. FOR SUCH A **SMART** GUY, YOU SURE DIDN'T COVER YOUR TRACKS THIS TIME.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S COMING OUT OF YOUR MOUTH, OTHER THAN YOUR **BIG FLAT FOOT,** AS USUAL...

BET THERE'S NOTHING NEW IN YOUR "BAG OF TRICKS" TO GET YOU OUT OF **THIS,** CAT.

TRUTH IS...

BAF!

...THE OLD TRICKS STILL WORK JUST FINE.

SLAM!!

AAAAH!!

BLAMM!!

FUCKING CAT!

BOOM!

BEAUTIFUL, NEAL!

HELP!!

38

AGH... MY HEAD!

GET ME OUTTA HERE!

I'M NOT EVEN HURT! IT MUST BE... WITCHCRAFT!

YOU IDIOT! IT'S NOT A **REAL** IRON MAIDEN! YOU'RE IN A **CIRCUS** PROP!

VROOM

THEY'RE GETTING AWAY! **MOVE IT!**

AND **YOU,** DON'T DO **ANY-THING** STUPID UNTIL WE **NAIL** THOSE PRICKS!

THESE ABANDONED GOLD MINES RUN ALL THROUGH COLORADO'S MOUNTAIN RANGES. COULD TAKE **HUNDREDS** OF YEARS BEFORE SOMEONE WANDERS DOWN HERE...

YOU GET THAT THIS IS NOTHING **PERSONAL,** CHAD...

YEAH, WE ALL KNOW POLYPHEMUS WAS A REAL **SLEAZEBAG...**

39

...BUT WE CAN'T LET THE WHOLE CIRCUS **TANK** JUST BECAUSE OF YOU.

THEN KILL ME! DON'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS! I DON'T WANNA DIE OF HUNGER... OR THIRST!

PLEASE...

WHY DIDN'T YOU RAT ME OUT?

BECAUSE... I MADE A HORRIBLE **MISTAKE** NOT LONG AGO, AND I JUST WANTED TO MAKE UP FOR IT, SOMEHOW, WITH ONE **GOOD** THING...

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

ONE GOOD THING... I HOPE.

40

THAT GODDAMN CAT'S GONE CRAZY!

I'LL SHOW HIM CRAZY!

BANG!

BOOM!

SCREEE

EEEEEEEEEE

VROOOOO

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAA

AAAHHHHH

BADABOOM

BADA

FUCKIN' IDIOT!!

41

HUFF, HUFF... YOU WRITE THE REPORT THIS TIME, MORON!

?!

PARTY'S OVER, CAT--!

AREN'T YOU THE ONE WHO SAID I'D "DO ANYTHING FOR A DRINK"?

WRAP IT UP! WE LEAVE IN ONE HOUR!

SIMON, WE HAVE TO FIND LUANNE. THAT GIRL IS WORTH A LOT OF MONEY!

YESTERDAY YOU COULDN'T WAIT TO AVENGE POLYPHEMUS, NO MATTER THE COST, AND NOW TODAY YOU'D SELL OUT ONE OF OUR OWN PERFORMERS...

WHO THE HELL HAVE YOU BECOME, ELMORE? WHAT ABOUT THAT BROTHERHOOD YOU CLAIM TO HOLD SO DEAR?

IF WE DON'T PAY OFF OUR DEBTS, THE FAMILY WILL FALL TO PIECES! I'VE GIVEN MY WHOLE LIFE TO THIS CIRCUS, AND I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO SAVE IT!

SO WILL I, AND I'M NOT WASTING ANY MORE TIME. THE SUNFLOWER CIRCUS LEAVES ON TOUR FOR CANADA IN ONE HOUR.

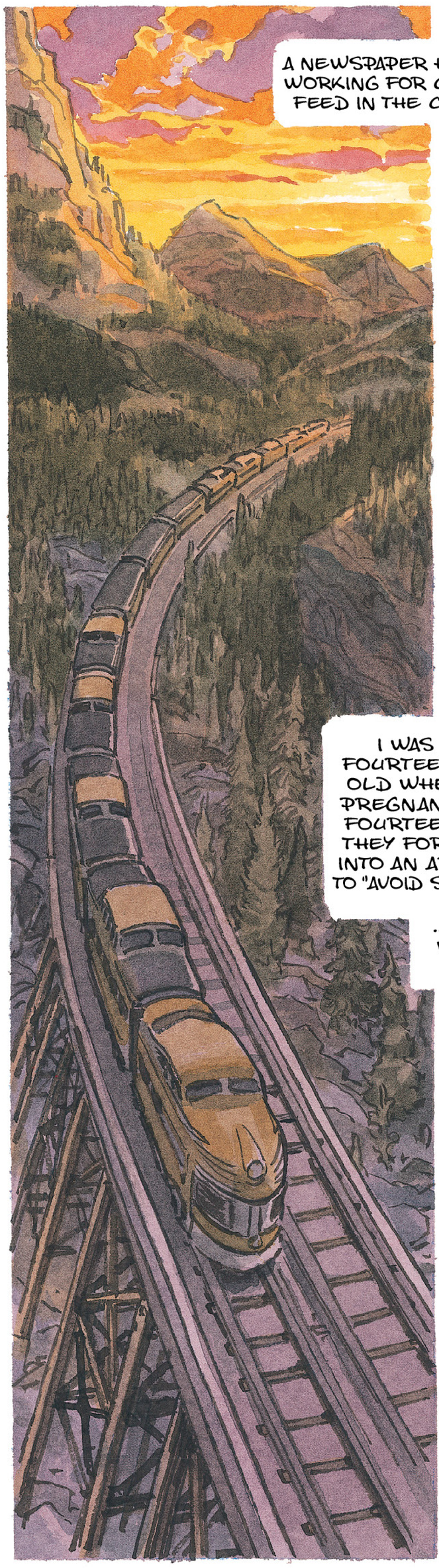
WE'RE NOT WAITING... FOR ANY-ONE.

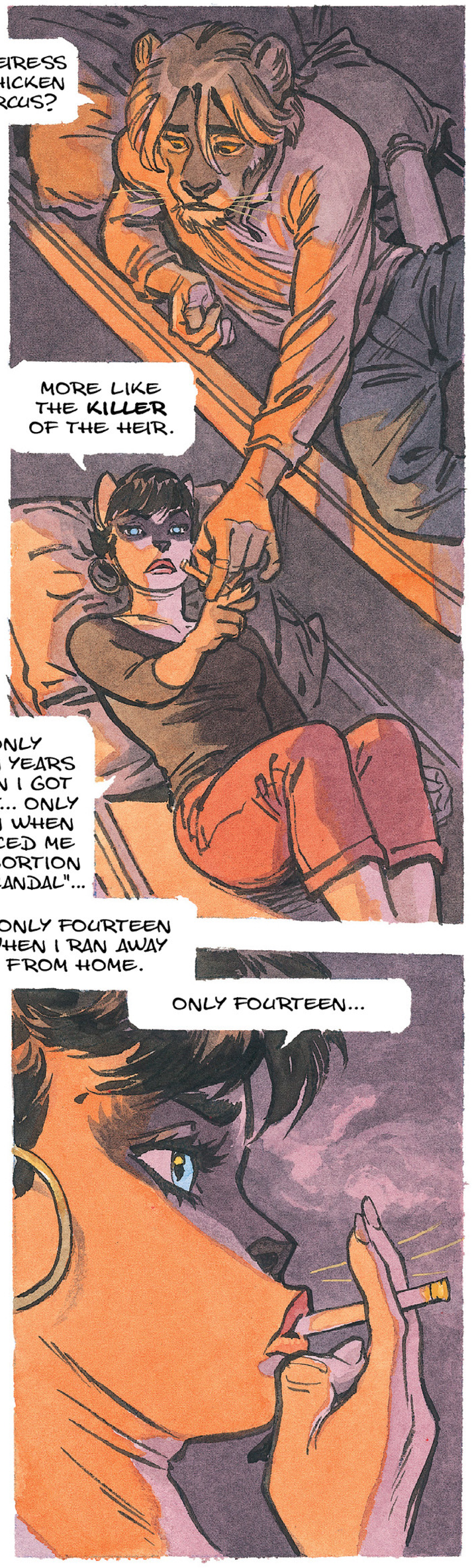
I SAW LUANNE! SHE BOUGHT A TRAIN TICKET TO CHICAGO...

...AND SHE WASN'T ALONE!

42

SO... WHO'S EVA?
GRAND-DAUGHTER OF AARON P. LANGE, A FAT CAT OF YELLOW JOURNALISM.


A NEWSPAPER HEIRESS WORKING FOR CHICKEN FEED IN THE CIRCUS?


MORE LIKE THE KILLER OF THE HEIR.
I WAS ONLY FOURTEEN YEARS OLD WHEN I GOT PREGNANT... ONLY FOURTEEN WHEN THEY FORCED ME INTO AN ABORTION TO "AVOID SCANDAL"...
...ONLY FOURTEEN WHEN I RAN AWAY FROM HOME.

ME.

ONLY FOURTEEN...

I WHIPPED UP A FAKE NAME AND SIGNED ON WITH THE CIRCUS. A NEW FAMILY... WHERE NOBODY ASKS ANY QUESTIONS.

MY REAL FAMILY HAS SPENT A LONG TIME LOOKING FOR ME, AND THEY'VE PUT UP SOME SERIOUS BREAD TO GET ME BACK. IT'S LIKE A BAD **NOVEL**, RIGHT?

NOVELS ARE **BULLSHIT.** BUT REAL LIFE IS EVEN WORSE.

NIGHT SHIFT. LINENS.

TOC TOC

COMING...

FOLLOW ME...

...I WANNA SHOW YOU A PIECE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE.

DON'T **BUDGE**, EVA. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.

CLICK

MOVE IT, CHAD.

OPEN THE DOOR.

CREEEK

DON'T YOU WORRY, MISS EVA. EVERYTHING'S UNDER CONTROL...

WOOOSH

NO **PUSSYCAT** TO PULL YOUR FAT OUT OF THE FIRE **THIS** TIME, YOUNG CUB!

JUMP!

WHUKKK!

CRAK!

AAAH!!

CHOMP!

BAM!

ARGH!

AH!!

DON'T DO THIS...

YAAAAARGH!

AAAA...

AAAAAAAAAAAA

TOO LATE FOR THAT, KID.

I... DON'T WANT TO BE A KILLER.

CHAD!

LUANNE!

UNION STATION. CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

I'M **REALLY** SORRY ABOUT YOUR CAR, DONNA...

PENNSYLVANIA RR UNION STATION

TELEPHONE

ALL SET. YOU CAN HIDE OUT AT MY SISTER'S PLACE FOR A WHILE. BUT WE SHOULD BOTH GET GOING. NEAL AND CHAD ARE AT THE BUS STATION, WAITING FOR ME.

...BUT I STILL HAVE **ANOTHER** FAVOR TO ASK. IT'S ABOUT A FRIEND...

CHAD CAN'T COME WITH **ME**, ON THE TRAIN?

YOU HEARD HIS STORY. HE **KILLED** A GUY.

HIS **FRIEND.** AND IT **HAUNTS** HIM EVERY DAY. ISN'T THAT PUNISHMENT ENOUGH?

HERE'S THE ADDRESS. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, LUANNE.

47

GREYHOUND BUS STATION. CHICAGO.

GREYHOUND

LOOK ON THE **BRIGHT** SIDE, CHAD. IT'S A CLEAR-CUT CASE OF INVOLUNTARY HOMICIDE WITH EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES: NAMELY, EXCESSIVE CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL...

IF YOU PLEAD GUILTY, THEN WITH THE HELP OF A **GREAT** ATTORNEY...

...AND THAT WOULD BE **ME**... I'LL HAVE YOU OUT IN LESS THAN A YEAR...

LIGHTEN UP, KID! PRETTY SOON YOU'LL BE AUTOGRAPHING YOUR BOOK, SURROUNDED BY SEXY BEATNIK CHICKS, WITH MORE **NOTES** IN YOUR **BANK** ACCOUNT THAN **ANY** BEBOP JAM...

FLUSHHH

...AND EVEN BETTER: IN **MY** ACCOUNT, TOO!

NEW YORK

BOSTON

JOHN SHOULD BE HERE SOON...

WE'VE GOT QUITE A FEW HOURS AHEAD OF US ON THE ROAD. I MIGHT AS WELL TAKE THAT TIME TO FINISH READING YOUR NOVEL. WHERE IS IT, BY THE WAY?

I LEFT IT IN THE PUBLIC SHITTER.

48

YOU **WHAT?**

ABE WAS RIGHT. AT LEAST THERE, MAYBE, IT'LL BE **USEFUL.**

CUT THE SHIT RIGHT NOW, KID! MOPE ALL YOU **WANT,** BUT QUIT TRYING TO DRAG THE **WHOLE DAMN WORLD** DOWN **WITH** YOU!

WHERE'RE YOU GOING?

TO GET THAT SCROLL. I'M GONNA PUBLISH IT. LIKE IT OR **NOT.**

YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND! THAT BOOK HAS GIVEN ME NOTHING BUT TRAGEDY.

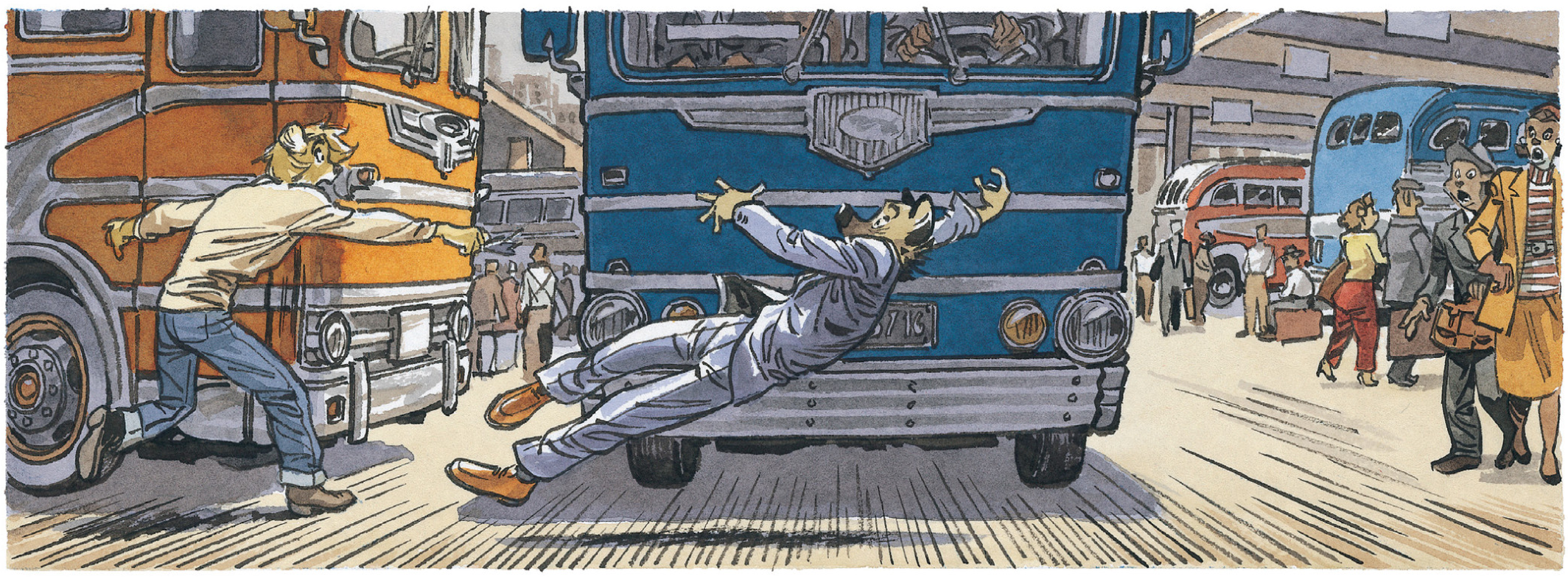
THE ONLY REAL TRAGEDY IS YOU CHOOSING TO DIE A SLOW, STUPID DEATH WHEN YOU'VE GOT YOUR ENTIRE GODDAMN LIFE AHEAD OF YOU...

DO WHATEVER THE HELL YOU WANT, BUT I WANT TO **LIVE.** CAN YOU DIG **THAT?**

TO LIVE AND LAUGH, TO PLAY, TO DANCE... **ANYTHING** BUT **WALLOW** IN MY OWN **PITIFUL SHIT** AS IF THAT WERE SOME GRAND **AESTHETIC ENTERPRISE.**

YOU DON'T HAVE THE **RIGHT!**

RR-RIIP!!



OFFEE

HEY, JOHN... I WOULD'VE LIKED TO SEE YOUR SISTER AGAIN... WHO KNOWS? YOU COULDA WOUND UP MY BROTHER-IN-LAW...

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, NEAL! A **LAWYER** IN THE FAMILY? NOT A **CHANCE**...

HEE! HEE! H--

OH, NO, NO, NO... **NEAL!** NOT **AGAIN**, NOT **YOU!**

I SAW IT ALL!

YEAH, THAT YOUNG LION **PUSHED** HIM!

SOMEBODY CALL THE COPS!

51

LUANNE!

CHAD? WHAT'S GOING ON?

LISTEN, LUANNE, TAKE HIM **WITH** YOU. GET AS FAR **AWAY** AS YOU CAN. MEXICO OR EUROPE...

BUT YOU...

NOT TO WORRY, KID. I'VE **BEEN** TO EUROPE--AND DON'T NEED TO REPLAY **THOSE** MEMORIES...

END OF THE ROAD, CAT...

CASE CLOSED. WE'VE EVEN IDENTIFIED THE BODY...

THE BODY... BELONGS TO **ABRAHAM GREENBERG**...

I SHOT HIM IN FRONT OF **BILL SORROWS**, WHO CAN CONFIRM THAT FOR YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, CHAD?

ONE GOOD THING... I HOPE.

52

NEW YORK.

I'M SORRY I LET YOUR PLANTS DIE, JOHN... I GUESS I FORGOT TO WATER THEM...

NO, NO, IT'S A GIFT. TO MAKE UP FOR THE PLANTS.

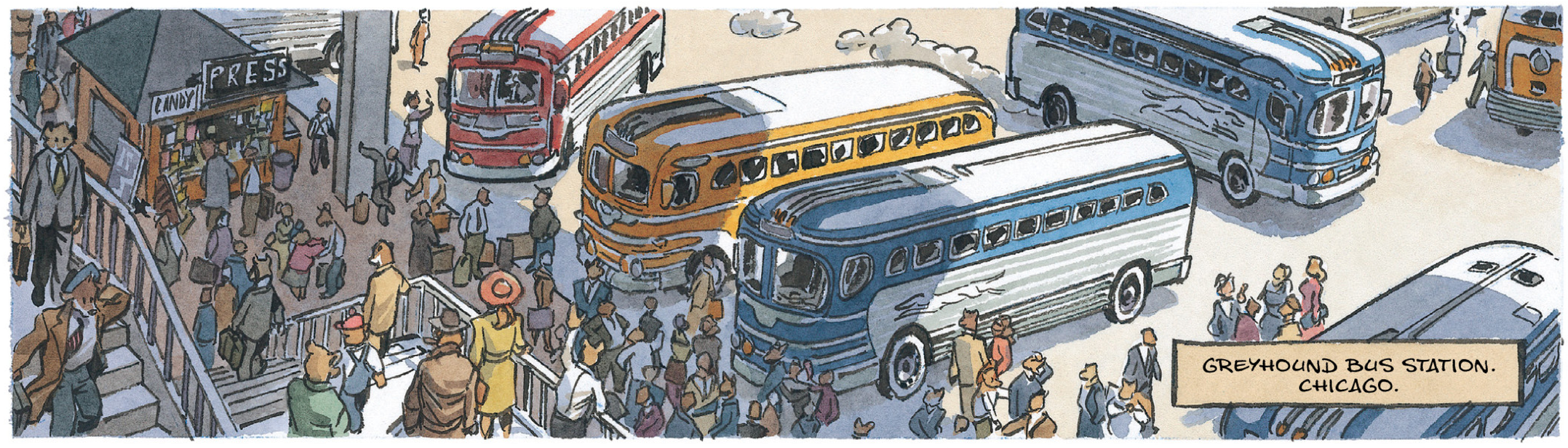
DON'T SWEAT IT. HERE, TAKE YOUR CAMERA. THERE'S AN UNFINISHED ROLL INSIDE.

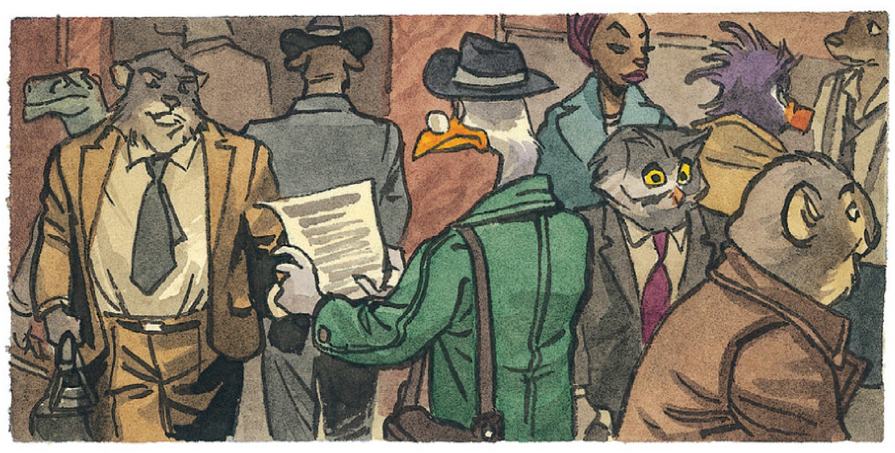
OKAY, THEN. THANKS, CHUM.

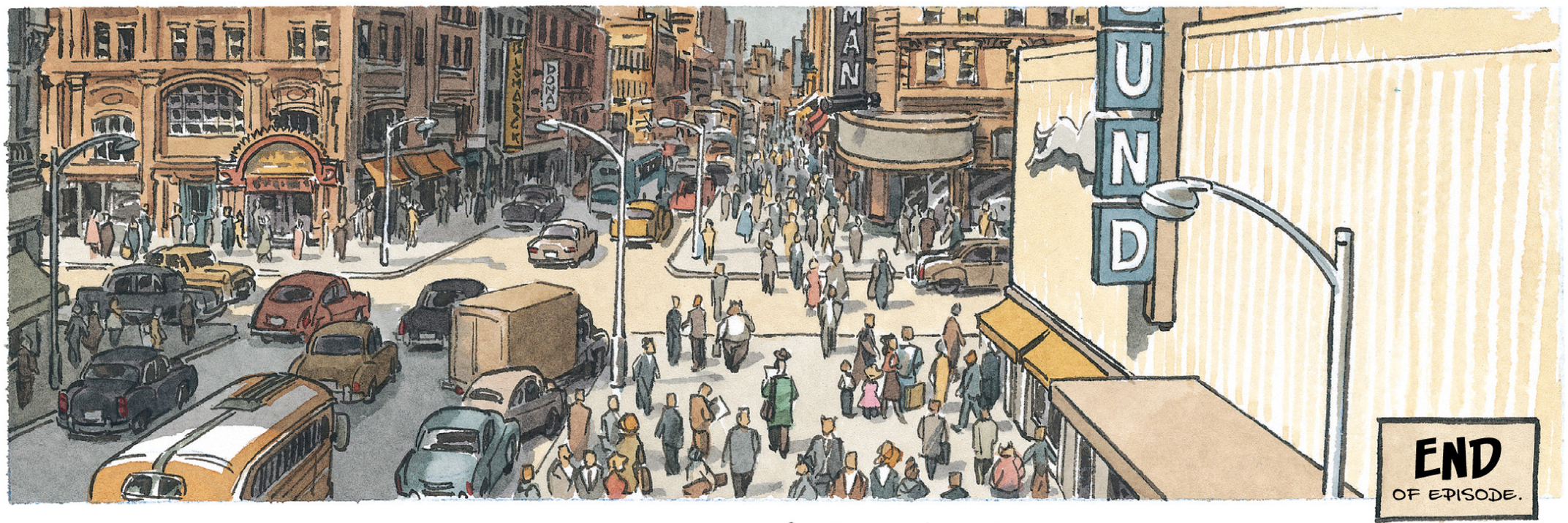
JUST... PROMISE YOU'LL SHOW ME THE PHOTOS ONCE THEY'RE DEVELOPED.

DEAL.

53

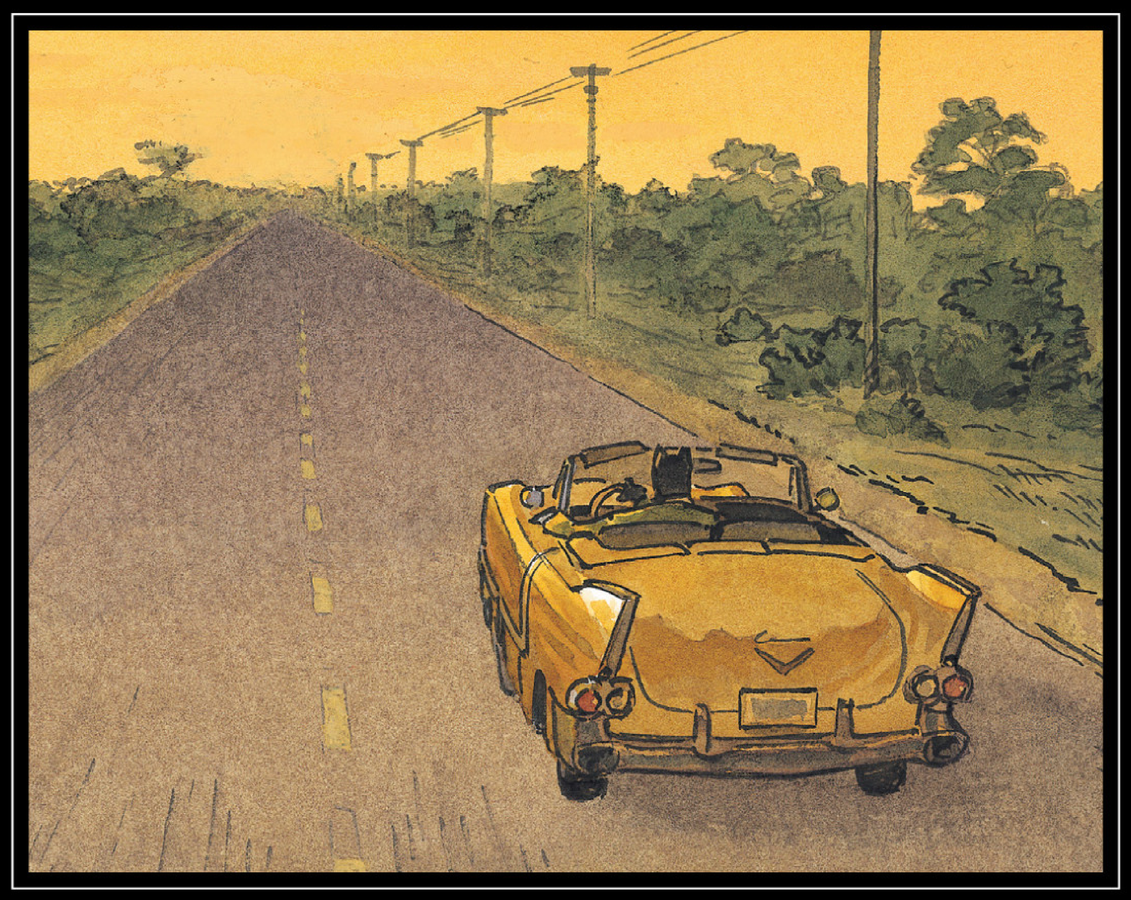






JUANJO GUARNIDO & JUAN DÍAZ CANALES

- 2013 -



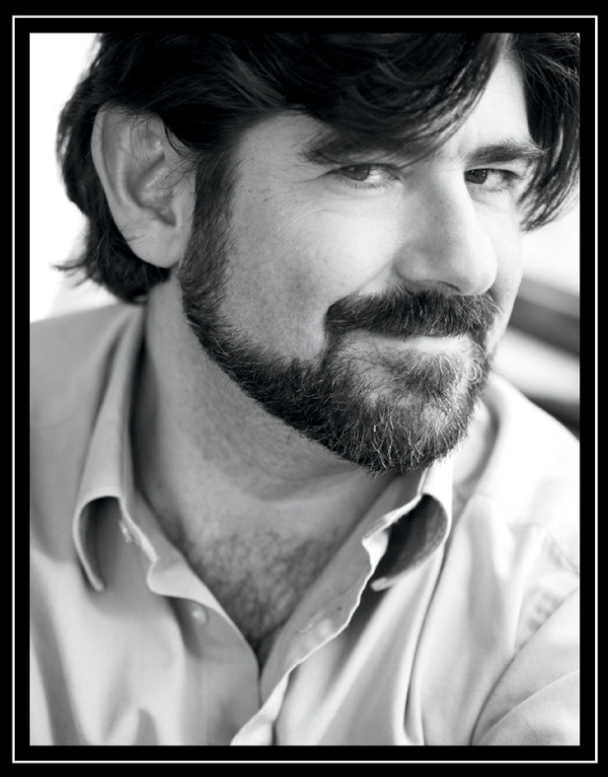
Open
WE BUY
TONE'S
USED
CARS

JUAN DÍAZ CANALES

Born in Madrid in 1972, Díaz Canales was a comics enthusiast from the very beginning. In 1990, at age eighteen, he was hired to do layout art for the Spanish animation studio Lápiz Azul, where he met Juanjo Guarnido. The two quickly became close friends and remained in contact after Guarnido moved to Paris in 1993 to work for the French satellite Disney animation studio. Distance, however, did not prevent the two friends from trading ideas about the comics project that would become *Blacksad,* a series of graphic albums written by Díaz Canales in the hard-boiled style of 1950s noir fiction.

During this time, Díaz Canales also studied fine arts at Universidad Complutense de Madrid until 1996, when he founded the Tridente Animación studio with three colleagues. This led to a variety of work for European and American companies. Currently the writer alternates between scripting comics and storyboarding television animated series and feature films.

Launched in the year 2000 to tremendous critical acclaim, *Blacksad* was Díaz Canales's first published work in comics. He has since collaborated with several artists, including José Luis Munuera on the graphic album *Fraternity*.



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JUANJO GUARNIDO

Juanjo Guarnido was born in Granada, Spain, in 1967.

He spent his childhood drawing, in the town of Salobreña on the Mediterranean coast, before moving north to Granada with his family. There he began contributing to many local fanzines and studied fine arts, obtaining his degree from Universidad de Granada. At this time, Guarnido also had illustrations published by Comics Forum—the division of Planeta DeAgostini producing Spanish-language editions of Marvel's comics—which allowed the artist to reach a wider audience in his native country. He turned next to animation, moving to Madrid to spend three years working on various television shows under the aegis of the Lápiz Azul animation studio.

On his first day at Lápiz Azul, Guarnido met Juan Díaz Canales, who would become his friend and the writer of *Blacksad*. In 1993, Guarnido moved to Paris to join the Walt Disney Studios satellite in Montreuil, first as a layout artist on *A Goofy Movie*, Mickey Mouse's *Runaway Brain*, and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, then becoming an animator on such films as *Hercules*, *Tarzan*, and *Atlantis*. Guarnido also contributed his talents to both *The Jungle Book 2* and *Lorenzo* before the French Disney office closed down, ten years after he was first hired.

A longtime fan both of the European *bande dessinée* market and of American comics, Guarnido patiently began the production of his first graphic album while still at Disney, working long distance with Díaz Canales toward the 2000 publication of *Blacksad: Somewhere within the Shadows*. The overwhelming success of the title has allowed Guarnido to take on other projects—like *Sorcelleries* with writer Teresa Valero—but his time is nonetheless primarily devoted to the adventures of John Blacksad.

NEAL ADAMS

Legendary artist and creators' rights activist Neal Adams began his career with a rejection from DC. Ten years later, he saved Marvel's *X-Men* from immediate cancellation and successfully updated DC's then campy Batman into today's revolutionary dark avenger. His award-winning *Green Lantern/Green Arrow* series with Denny O'Neil broke new ground when it brought superheroes face-to-face with real-world issues of racism, drug addiction, pollution, and overpopulation.

Adams played a pivotal role in winning rights for creators in the comics business, including the return of their original artwork; the payment of royalties; the acquisition of better paper; and the achievement of better painting methods. He led the charge in the fight to ensure that Superman creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster received royalties and recognition. Neal's illustration skills and immense popularity with fans gave him the clout to break down comic book publishers' oppressive, unspoken "rules" that an artist or writer could work for only one of the big companies—he was the first artist to draw concurrently for DC and Marvel under his own name, striking another blow for creators' rights.

He is the co-founder of Continuity Studios and Production Company, a world-renowned art studio and editorial facility for film, television, advertising, and comics including *Bucky O'Hare, Ms. Mystic, Nighthawk,* and *Skeleton Warriors*. He has been inducted into both the Eisner Awards' Will Eisner Hall of Fame and the Harvey Awards' Jack Kirby Hall of Fame.

Adams's recent work includes *Batman: Odyssey, The First X-Men*, the upcoming *Blood* graphic novel, and an exciting Superman series for DC, which should debut at the end of 2014.

KATIE LaBARBERA

Katie LaBarbera works as a reference librarian for a public library. She has translated Martí's *The Cabbie,* published by Fantagraphics Books; and for Dark Horse, *Blacksad: A Silent Hell* as well as Alejandro Jodorowsky and Milo Manara's *The Borgias*. She lives in St. Louis with her husband, cartoonist Kevin Huizenga, and her dog Fritz.

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BLACKSAD: AMARILLO

Blacksad 5 – Amarillo
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BLACKSAD

In this highly anticipated follow-up to the multiple award-winning *A Silent Hell*, hardboiled detective John Blacksad finds himself on the road across 1950s America, cruising in a golden Cadillac Eldorado west from New Orleans, while taking a much-needed break from the deadly dramas that dog his feline tail—or so he thinks. Before long, Blacksad's hard luck catches up with him, landing him smack in the middle of another murder and in pursuit of a down-and-out Beat generation writer whose own luck might just have run out.

The latest tour de force from writer Juan Díaz Canales and artist Juanjo Guarnido, *Blacksad: Amarillo* is a heartrending tale told in lush, hand-painted watercolor. Available in North America for the first time since its bestselling 2013 release in France, this edition features an introduction by comics legend Neal Adams, who also teams with *Blacksad* veteran Katie LaBarbera for the final English-language translation.

Blacksad and its creators continue to garner many international honors, including three prestigious prizes from the Angoulême International Comics Festival, as well as several Eisner and Harvey awards. This exceptional series of graphic albums has been translated into over twenty different languages and counts its fans throughout the entire world.

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